

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended. Support for amendment to claim 1 can be found, for example, in Fig. 1. Thus, no new matter is added.

Applicant appreciates the courtesies shown to Applicant's representatives by Examiner Lugo and Examiner Merlino in the January 14, 2008 personal interview. Applicant's separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

Specifically, claim 1 is amended to comply with the Examiners' helpful suggestions made during the interview.

I. Declaration

The Declaration is objected to because the Office Action asserts that the Declaration does not identify the citizenship of each inventor. A fully executed Declaration that includes the citizenship of each inventor was filed with the Submission of Substitute Declaration filed November 29, 2007. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

II. The Specification Satisfies All Formal Requirements

The specification is objected to because of informalities. As agreed during the personal interview, the November 21, 2007 Amendment corrected the informalities according to the Office Action's suggestions. Withdrawal of the objection is thus respectfully requested.

III. Claim Objections

Claims 1-14 are objected to because of informalities. As agreed during the personal interview, the November 21, 2007 Amendment corrected the informalities according to the Office Action's suggestions. Withdrawal of the objection is thus respectfully requested.

IV. §112 Rejection of Claim 9

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as failing to particularly point out whether the "pair of compression links" recited in claim 9 is the same "pair of

"compression links" recited in claim 1. By the November 21, 2007 Amendment, claim 9 has been amended to cancel "one pair of compression links." Therefore, the rejection of claim 9 is moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

V. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

A. 35 U.S.C. §102(b) Rejection of Claims 1-7 and 9-12 Over Stammreich

Claims 1-7 and 9-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,743,052 to Stammreich et al. ("Stammreich"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As agreed upon during the personal interview, Stammreich does not teach or suggest "a single operating member pivoting about an end pin situated on the hook . . . an intermediate pin located on the operating member, the intermediate pin being positioned between the main pin and the end pin," as recited in independent claim 1.

Thus, for at least these reasons, claim 1 is patentable over Stammreich. Further, claims 2-7 and 9-12, which depend from independent claim 1, are also patentable over Stammreich for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1, as well as for the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

B. 35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejection of Claim 8 Over Stammreich In View of Bourne

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Stammreich in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,984,382 to Bourne et al. ("Bourne"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As agreed upon during the personal interview, Bourne does not remedy the above-described deficiencies of Stammreich. Thus, claim 8, which depends from claim 1, is patentable over Stammreich and Bourne, for at least these reasons as well as for the additional features it recites. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

**C. 35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejection of Claims 13 and 14
Over Stammreich in View of Sessler**

Claims 13 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Stammreich in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,783,072 to Sessler ("Sessler"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As agreed upon during the personal interview, Sessler does not remedy the above-described deficiencies. Thus, claims 13 and 14, which depend from claim 1, are patentable over Stammreich and Sessler, for at least these as well as for the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

D. Bourne and Henrichs

The Office Action, on page 9, asserts that Bourne and/or EP 0,431,769 to Henrichs ("Henrichs") could support a rejection of claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b). These assertions are respectfully traversed.

As agreed upon during the personal interview, Bourne does not disclose every feature of independent claim 1. For example, Bourne does not disclose a single operating member, as recited in independent claim 1.

Further, Henrichs also does not disclose every feature of independent claim 1. Henrichs does not disclose a hook that is located between the opening member and the main pin as recited in independent claim 1. In Henrichs, the main pin extends through a hole in the hook, and thus, Henrichs does not disclose a hook that is located between the opening member and the main pin. Further, Henrichs does not disclose "wherein the hook is located between the operating member and the main pin, and at least one of the compression links is provided with a guide means contacting a surface of the hook which is nearest the operating member during the opening of the latch, such that the hook is supported by the guide means when the latch is open," as recited in claim 1 (emphasis added).

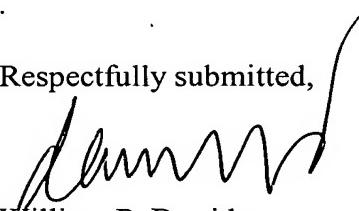
Thus, for at least these reasons, independent claim 1 is patentable over Bourne and Henrichs. Further, claims 2-8, which depend from independent claim 1, are also patentable over Bourne and Henrichs for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claim 1, as well as for the additional features they recite.

VI. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-14 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



William P. Berridge
Registration No. 30,024

Randi B. Isaacs
Registration No. 56,046

WPB:PQWmrh

Date: January 31, 2008

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 320850
Alexandria, Virginia 22320-4850
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461
--